



# The Central Visitor

A weekly visitor to your home bringing you news from Central Christian Church

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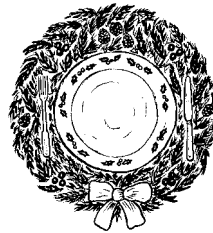
## Chamber Orchestra Sunday Morning

Be sure to join those who worship God and celebrate the advent of Jesus Christ at Central this Sunday with the Millikin-Decatur Symphony Chamber Orchestra (MDSO) conducted by **Dr. Michael Luxner** in concert with the Chancel Choir directed by Minister of Music **Don Martin** and our distinguished organist **Leslie Peart**. At both services strings and brass of MDSO and the artists of our church will join forces to praise God and celebrate the joy of Christmas. Don't miss this Sunday! And say a prayer of thanks for the generosity of Central's dear members who have made special gifts to make this special music part of our celebration of the coming of Jesus Christ.



## Come Home to Central for Christmas

We hope you and your family are planning to Come Home to Central this Sunday as we celebrate the theme, "Rejoice!" This year, our Fellowship and Shepherding departments will host a delicious brunch at 9:15 a.m. and an equally delightful lunch at noon, both in the Great Hall. Come Home to Central for Christmas!



**Hunger Relief Team Serves at Good Samaritan Inn  
this Saturday, December 15.**

## Christmas Doesn't End!

Christmas isn't just December 25<sup>th</sup>! The church's celebration of the advent of Jesus Christ into the world to save us continues for twelve days through January 5.

On December 31 (the seventh day of Christmas), **Paul Fleckenstein** will travel from Charlotte, North Carolina, to play the magnificent organ at Central Christian Church in a sixth annual New Year's Eve Organ Pops Concert at 8:30 p.m. in our sanctuary.



This is a fun and glad time of preparation for your own celebration of the arrival of the New Year later that evening. Be sure to start your celebration in God's house at 8:30 p.m.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2007**

**WORSHIP AT 8:15 AND 10:45**

**Great Expectations**

Text: Matthew 11:2-11

Charles Watkins

## Please Pick Up Your Poinsettias This Sunday!

If you have not yet picked up your poinsettias, please do so this week. We will do our best to keep them watered but they will be much happier in your home with your TLC and you will be much happier being able to enjoy them. Any poinsettias remaining in the Heritage Center after Sunday will be donated to a local nursing home!

## Christmas Eve Service

Our congregation will celebrate the birth of Jesus in a traditional service of candlelight and communion on Monday, December 24 at 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. The service will last less than one hour, and all your out-of-town guests are welcome to worship with you on Christmas Eve and to receive the Lord's Supper, for in our church the Lord's Table is open to all believers in Christ regardless of denominational affiliation or tradition. Child care will be available in the nursery.

## Installation of Officers

The congregation of Central Christian Church will install the trustees, elders, deacons, and emeriti officers elected in September during the morning worship services on December 30.

## Central Youth

**Christmas Caroling**  
**Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>**  
**4:30-6:30 p.m.**

We will travel to several members' homes to spread Holiday cheer! Hot chocolate will be waiting for us when we return!



"HERE WE COME A-CAROLING!"

**Christmas Party**  
**Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
**5:30-8:00 p.m.**

Youth are invited to Pastor Robert's home for a Christmas Party. Watch for an invitation in your mailbox soon.



**Holiday Schedule Change**  
**Sunday, December 30<sup>th</sup>**  
Central Youth will not meet.

## Charles's Column

What a great idea the Church had when it decided to take an old pagan holiday, baptize it, and turn it into a wonderful celebration of the birth of Christ. The earliest church fathers, of course, would not permit any recognition of Jesus's birth as if Jesus were just some ordinary emperor or potentate. The Church failed even to take note of what time of year Jesus was born, much less to observe and celebrate it.

I like to imagine what that church committee meeting must have been like around the middle of the Fourth Century when Christmas was proposed. Did somebody have the bright idea to celebrate the Holy Birth with a special mass and liturgy? Or were church leaders sitting there scratching their heads about how to handle the out-of-control behavior of church people toward the end of the year? Christians were quite subject to the traditions of their culture, and when the wild partying that marked the Roman Saturnalia Festival started in late December, even the most conscientious believers were sorely tempted to join in the festivities to mark the passing of the old year and the dawning of the new. I wonder who had the terrific idea that the Church should attempt to take over the existing celebration and turn it into holy days.

In those days there were two major Christian celebrations: Easter and Pentecost, fifty days later. Whoever first imagined celebrating the birth of Jesus in December would never have believed that the new holiday would one day eclipse Pentecost in popular importance and become even more festive than Easter.

But in just a few centuries, Christians grew to love this festival of light in the darkest days of the year and to enjoy this celebration of new birth when all nature takes on the appearance of death. Someday I want to experience Christmas in the Southern Hemisphere where the late days of December are the early days of summer. I need to see what an Australian Christmas tree looks like and watch children going outdoors to swim on Christmas afternoon when it is nearly the longest, lightest day of the year!

Although I can only imagine the process by which the church started taking over the end-of-the-year bash to make it Christian (an effort which has been only partially successful after 1700 years), I am so glad that whoever had the idea had it. What a wonderful time this is in the lives of children and the life of the church. I hope you are planning to celebrate in church this Sunday for one of our most beautiful services of the year and then again on Christmas Eve at 7:30 p.m. Celebrate the Holy Birth, and share the joy!

*Charles Watkins*

## Plan Ahead for a Life-Changing Mission Opportunity in 2008!

Central Christian Church and our sister congregation, Prairie Avenue Christian Church, are planning a third trip to the New Orleans area for next year. Our mission delegation will leave Decatur on Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup> and return to Decatur Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. During our week in Slidell, LA, we will work with local Disciples Churches and the North Shore Emergency Relief Agency, helping to rebuild individual homes that were destroyed in the 2005 hurricanes. Now is the time to plan ahead, save these dates, and arrange for time away! More details and registration forms will be available soon.

## News From the Pews.....

**Dorothy & Susan Smith, Tom DeZarn** and families following the December 5<sup>th</sup> death of *Pearl "Jim" DeZarn*.



### **Spirit of Christmas Gifts Dedicated**

Festively wrapped gifts carried to the chancel by children, youth and adults were dedicated during our morning worship services on December 9<sup>th</sup>. Your generosity was evident and is greatly appreciated. After three weeks, more than twenty names were left on our kiosk. Volunteers are shopping this week to complete our mission for 2007. Monetary donations are welcome to help as we complete our list and prepare to deliver gifts on December 19<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to give a donation, simply mark your

check made payable to Central with the word Spirit in the memo. Thank you for the incredible generosity you have shown through the Spirit of Christmas mission in 2007!

### **A Little Something for Your 2008 Calendar**

Beginning on Sunday, January 20<sup>th</sup> a new ten-week course entitled *Experiencing the Bible Again for the First Time* by Marcus Borg and Tim Scorer will be offered each Sunday at 9:30 a.m. in the Great Hall. **Pastor Robert** will lead the multi-media course which surveys the Old and New Testaments through the lenses of contemporary scholarship. A curriculum editor said recently: *this study provokes inquiry, welcomes questions, engages the imagination and encourages listening for and discovering the word in the other. Engaging the three centers of learning, head, heart, and gut, participants encounter and engage the biblical story and tradition and make meaning in their own lives toward transformation - Susan Burt, Coordinating Editor of Seasons of the Spirit.*

An engaging Bible Study is a great way to begin the New Year! Add the dates to your shiny, new, "blank" 2008 calendar and prepare to experience the Bible as a fresh new resource for your faith journey. Watch for information soon on another new course *Experiencing Jesus Again for the First Time* beginning on Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **A Decisive Month**

Now is the time for all loyal Christians to come to the aid of your church. December is "make it or break it" month for the current budget. For most of the year, your gifts have kept up with expenses, and the church has done well, so help bring the year to a strong finish. Any help you can give with a special gift for the church this month will really help at a time when help is especially valued.



### **Sunday, December 16, 2007**

8:15 and 10:45-Worship Services  
Music: Millikin Decatur Symphony

Chamber Orchestra

9:00-9:45-Parish Nurse Cindy Soebbing

9:15-Come Home for Christmas Brunch

9:30-Sunday School

11:15-Children's Worship, 250

12:00-Come for Christmas Lunch

4:30-Youth Caroling

### **Monday (17)**

4:00-Aerobics, 290

6:30-Boy Scouts, Great Hall & Disciple Room

6:30-CCC Bowling, PlaMor Lanes

### **Tuesday (18)**

9:00-ChristCare Stitchers, 207

10:00-Pastors' Staff Meeting,

Senior Pastor's Study

4:00-Aerobics, 290

4:00-H2O Volunteers, Hope School

### **Wednesday (19)**

9:00-Baby Talk Parents, 290

12:00-Central Singers

4:00-Aerobics, 290

### **Thursday (20)**

10:00-Alanon, 212

1:30-ChristCare, 290

4:00-Aerobics, 290

7:00-Chancel Choir

### **Friday (21)**

10:30-Wedding Rehearsal

### **Saturday (22)**

10:00-Christmas Pageant Rehearsal,  
Great Hall Stage

5:00-Christina Doxsie & Erick Lee,  
Flewelling Chapel

## **Counting On You**

### **December 9**

Worship Attendance ..... 212  
Sunday School Attendance ..... 43

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## Serving Schedule—December 16, 2007

### Elders:

8:15 & 10:45 - Bruce Campbell, Claudia Quigg

### Deacons:

8:15 - Team 1 - Gene Garver, Capt., Jared Carter, Bev Chapman, Merle Chapman, Dennis Downey, Al Fagin, Chris Fagin, Sally Force, Sandy Garver, Dean Gray, Janet Gray, Joe Lewis, Brittney Munos, Gail Prince, Larry Prince, Dean Simcox, Sue Simcox

10:45 - Team 2 - Richard Ward, Capt., Cathy Ash, Jim Ash, Neil Baird, Debbie Bateman, Philip Bateman, Azalee Berner, Warren Berner, Dale Ford, Judy Ford, Alex Harm, Erik Harm, Christine Lyman-Harm, Daniel Hinze, David Martin, Ron Oliver, Dave Phillips, Nita Phillips, Kelly Swallow, Steve Swarthout, Janet Thicksten, Larry Thicksten, Sally Thicksten, Kathy Thornton

### Ushers:

8:15 - Team 2 - Don Tankersley, Capt., Carl Boline, Frances Heiserman, Becky Johnston

10:45 - Team 7 - Karen McFadin, Chad McFadin, Jon French, Jane French, Clyde Booher

### Greeters:

8:15 - Betty Cox, Betty Ann Roe, Stephen & Juanita Ballance

10:45 - John & Carol Graham, Jon & Jane French

### Parish Nurse:

 Cindy Soebbing

### Acolytes:

8:15 - Bobby Munos

10:45 - Avery Martin

### P.A. Operator:

8:15 - Greg Carter

10:45 - Keith Backes

### Preparation of Communion:

Barbara Beyer, Karen Baird, Donna Dash, Gerri & Mike Munos

### Van Drivers:

8:15 service and Sunday School - Bruce Williams

Sunday School and 10:45 service - Kevin Wilmot

10:45 service only - Ron Oliver

Home after Christmas Lunch - Bruce Williams

## December 19 Visitor Mailing Crew:

Joanne Gustin, Marge Karl

### Hosts:

Dec. 17 9:00-12:30 - Janet Gray

12:30-4:00 - Gail Prince

Dec. 18 9:00-12:30 - Barbara Beyer

12:30-4:00 - Melissa Byrd

Dec. 19 9:00-12:30 - Marylu Lyman

12:30-4:00 - Sally Thicksten

Dec. 20 9:00-12:30 - Jean Booher

12:30-4:00 - Donna Strong

Dec. 21 9:00-12:30 - Juanita Ballance

12:30-4:00 - *Help Needed*

**Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**  
**650 West William Street Decatur, Illinois 62522**  
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**HTTP://WWW.CCCDISCIPLES.ORG**  
**e-mail: *central@cccdisciples.org***

Charles Watkins ..... Senior Pastor  
Robert Bushey ..... Pastor for Children Youth and Families  
Gretchen Barron ..... Pastor for Evangelism and Membership  
C. William Nichols ..... Senior Minister Emeritus  
Jim Whitaker ..... Pastor for Visitation  
Don Martin ..... Minister of Music  
Leslie Peart ..... Organist  
Valerie Rozanski ..... Administrative Assistant  
Pat Beals ..... Administrative Assistant  
Sue Burkham, Jane Latschaw ..... Parish Nurse Coordinators  
Katie Beal ..... Childcare Coordinator  
Joanne Frady, Debra Fulk ..... Childcare Providers  
Shelby Larrick, Kaylene Beal ..... Childcare Providers  
Shelly Messmore ..... Preschool Director  
Trudy Garland, Janet Langston ..... Preschool Teachers  
Wendy Jalley, Kay Villarreal, Robin White .... Preschool Teachers  
Rudi Descaro ..... Caretaker  
David Flanders ..... Caretaker  
Dean Hadden ..... Caretaker  
Charles Wallace ..... Caretaker

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**(Disciples of Christ)**  
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